

VZCZCXRO1742  
OO RUEHDBU RUEHFL RUEHKW RUEHLA RUEHROV RUEHSR  
DE RUEHSI #2791 3121557  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
O 081557Z NOV 07  
FM AMEMBASSY TBILISI  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8148  
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L TBILISI 002791

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EUR DAS BRYZA AND EUR/CARC

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/08/2017  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [GG](#)  
SUBJECT: SAAKASHVILI ANNOUNCES PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS FOR  
JANUARY 5

REF: TBILISI 2789

Classified By: Ambassador John F. Tefft for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary. In a live address November 8 President Saakashvili announced his intention to hold a presidential election on January 5, 2008, effectively giving up a year of his term. According to the constitution, Speaker Nino Burjanadze will assume the presidency until the election date. Saakashvili also said a referendum will be held for voters to decide if parliamentary elections will be held in spring or fall 2008. Saakashvili said he thought the state of emergency would likely lapse before the 48 hour deadline passed requiring Parliamentary approval. Prior to his address, Saakashvili told the Ambassador amnesty would be given to almost all protesters arrested except for a few opposition leaders implicated in the plot to overthrow the government and he did not yet know what would happen to the IMEDI television station.

¶2. (C) President Saakashvili made the live announcement of his resignation on television November 8 at 1900. He said presidential elections will be held on January 5, 2008. He also announced a referendum on the date of parliamentary elections to allow voters to decide on fall or spring elections. In his address, Saakashvili said the opposition had "knocked on the door demanding early elections and he was opening the door."

¶3. (C) Saakashvili said the state of emergency would likely lapse before the Parliament would have a chance to vote on its continuance.

¶4. (C) Saakashvili told the Ambassador in a phone call earlier in the day that Shalva Natelashvili and his family had fled to Russia on November 7 via Tskhinvali. The government believes Natelashvili, along with opposition leader Konstantine Gamsakhurdia, received Russian money to use the November 2 protests to overthrow the government and are now wanted (reftel). Saakashvili also said Burjanadze would meet with several moderate representatives of the opposition, including Davit Gamkrelidze, Gogi Topadze, Zurab Tkemeladze, and David Usupashvili.

TEFFT